JUNIOR RANGER

Let’s Go Fishing!

ACTIVITY BOOK
Hey there!

With this book in your hands, you’re already on your way to becoming a Junior Ranger Angler! All across the United States you can find public lands, places we protect and share for all. If you’re ready to dive into the world of fishing, these parks, wildlife refuges, fish hatcheries, and reserves are great places to start. Follow the directions below to begin your adventure.

Complete this book.
Do as much as you can as best as you can. If you’re really about to go fishing, great! If you’re not fishing today, use this book to plan a fishing trip—real or imaginary—that you would like to go on.

Check your work. Show a ranger, fish and wildlife manager, teacher, or other adult what you completed.

Get a Junior Ranger Angler badge. Return your completed book to a participating park, wildlife refuge, or hatchery. See the back cover for more instructions.

Angler: one who fishes with a rod and line.

Junior Ranger Angler: one who respects fish and fish habitats, protects nature, and is a role model for safe and smart angling practices.

HUMBACK CHUB Anglers help this native fish by fishing for non-native fish competitors at Canyonlands National Park.

CATCHING DINNER? For types of fish and amounts of fish safe to eat, check fish eating guidelines (fish consumption advisories).

Know before you go! Read and discuss the SAFETY and STAY SMART checklists with your friends and family.

STAY SMART CHECKLIST

1. I’m fishing with a buddy.
2. We gave a friend or family member our fishing plan.
3. We know the rules for fishing.
4. We’re not relying on cell phones. (Phone service may be limited. Only use phone flashlight and map apps as backup.)
2 Meet a Fish

Northern pike
The pike’s long body is designed for quick bursts to grab prey. Pike live in lakes and like to hide in aquatic plants, waiting for dinner to swim by.

Bluegill sunfish
A skinny shape and special fins help this fish swim fast and change directions quickly. Sunfish search for bugs in the underwater grasses of lakes and ponds.

Channel catfish
Like whiskers, barbels help catfish move and find food as they hide in muddy creeks, channels, or under logs.

3 Fish and People

For thousands of years, fishing has been important not just for fun but for food and survival. Fish are still an important food source around the world today.

The amazing halibut hook. Imagine you are in a canoe, fishing in the icy waters of Alaska. You hope to catch a halibut, a flat fish that lives on the sea floor. The problem is, halibut can be huge—over 300 pounds! If you hook a big one, it could swamp your boat! What do you do? Long ago, the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people of Alaska designed a wooden hook that catches only perfect sized halibut. The biggest halibut, can’t fit their lip through the opening. The smaller halibut can’t fit their mouths around the top. These beautifully carved lures show how art, design, and respect for and understanding of fish can come together in fishing.
4 The Junior Angler Way

Choose one rule and create a ‘poster’ below imagining you are helping rangers and fish and wildlife managers teach others about the rule and why it is important.

- WEAR A LIFE JACKET.
- DON’T FORGET WATER, SNACKS, EXTRA CLOTHES, HAT, SUNGLASSES, SUNSCREEN, FLASHLIGHT, AND FIRST AID KIT.
- FISH WITH A FRIEND.
- WHEN WEATHER GETS BAD OR THUNDER ROARS—GO INDOORS.
- KNOW HOW TO IDENTIFY, HANDLE + RELEASE FISH.
- GIVE ANGLERS SPACE—STAY AWAY FROM OTHER FISHING LINES AND CHECK YOUR AREA BEFORE CASTING YOUR LINE.
- KEEP FISH HABITATS CLEAN—DON’T LEAVE BEHIND TRASH OR FISHING LINE.

5 Types of Fishing

From the rushing rivers of the Rocky Mountains to deep ocean trenches, from warm swamps to the frigid waters beneath thick lake ice, fish can be found across the United States and around the world!

ICE FISHING
On frozen lakes huddled around a hole cut into the ice, you can try to catch pike, walleye, perch, and bluegill.
Visit: Long Lake National Wildlife Refuge, North Dakota.

SURF FISHING
With an extra long fishing rod, you can stand in the sand and cast out into the surf for striped bass, red drum, or dogfish.
Visit: Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge, Virginia.

DEEP SEA FISHING
Bring a strong fishing pole and head far out into the ocean to look for fish like halibut, cod, and snapper.
Visit: Biscayne National Park, Florida.

LAKE FISHING
In lakes, crappie, bass, and trout might be lurking nearby. Try to learn the different places they hide!
Visit: Hagerman National Fish Hatchery, Idaho.

RIVER FISHING
You can wade in the water, stand on the bank, sit in a kayak, or work on tying a fly. Try for trout and bass.
Visit: Ozark National Scenic Riverway, Missouri.

STAY SAFE! Always check to make sure it is safe and allowed to enter the water!

Where are you visiting today and/or Where do you live? Mark an X on the map. If you live outside the United States, you can write your home country below.

What kind of fishing would you try at this site or in your state? Check out the list on the right for ideas!

Circle a type of fishing you’ve never tried before. What do you think would be fun about it? What would be challenging?
Get to Know the Gear

Label the fishing setup on the left by writing in the name of each part.

1. **Fishing rod**: the main tool used in fishing, a pole that holds the reel and fishing line.

2. **Line**: a special ‘string’ made for fishing.

3. **Reel**: a device that holds, spools out, and retrieve fishing line.

4. **Hook**: usually sharp, shaped like a ‘J’ and attached at the end of the line, it catches or hooks the fish.

5. **Bait**: a natural attractant like worms or baitfish that tempts the fish into biting the hook.

6. **Lure**: an item designed to look like the fish’s prey or other food it would like to eat.

7. **Fly**: a special kind of lure made by tying strings and feathers, it is used in river fishing.

8. **Bobber**: a ball attached to fishing line that floats. It keeps bait from sinking to the bottom and can help you see when a fish bites!

9. **Sinker**: a weight that helps pull the line down in the water, closer to the bottom.

Although there are many different kinds of fishing and types of fishing gear, you can start by learning this basic setup.

Find out the regulations for the site you are visiting or would like to visit. For help, you can ask a fish and wildlife manager or ranger or visit the state info page at TakeMeFishing.org. Know before you go!

Where will you be fishing?

What kind of fish would you like to catch?

Can you keep this fish? How many?

(If applicable) How long must the fish be for you to keep it?

Who in your group needs a fishing license?

Which species (kinds of fish) are "catch and release" only?

Check that the site is open for you to visit and fish.

Check which types of bait and lures, and sinkers you can use.

GEAR TIPS!
- Protect wildlife by using lead-free sinkers.
- Learn how to cast by visiting TakeMeFishing.org
Angler Tips

A smart angler learns about fish, how to find them, and how to handle them safely and with respect.

- Try barbless hooks. They cause less harm to the fish.
- Use wet hands—never a towel—when holding fish so you don’t wipe off the fish's protective slime.
- Don’t keep a fish out of water too long. Put it back gently head-first.

Read and discuss these tips with your friends or family.

Read the tips below and mark an X in the places you think you might find fish.

RIVER FISHING
River bends and confluences, places where two bodies of water meet, have good food for fish. Rocks make pockets of calmer water downstream. Fish also like eddies where water slows and whirlpools.

LAKE FISHING
Lily pads, logs, grass beds, fishing piers, and other 'structures' give places for fish to hide and find food. Holes have cooler, deeper water that some fish like on hot days. Islands and the lake edge can be good fish habitat too.

AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS.
Check your boots and boat! Don’t accidentally bring worms, snails, or other plants and animals to a fish habitat where they don’t belong.

Clean these boots by marking an X on each ‘hitchhiker’ or other spots where the boots looks dirty.

Tic-Tac-Go Outside

You don’t have to catch a fish to have fun while fishing!

Go outside and play tic-tac-go with a friend or family member. One person is X and one is O. Take turns picking squares to complete and mark. First to get three in a row wins. (If you’re doing this activity by yourself, try getting three in a row or the four corners.)

Find something a fish would eat. Draw it here.

Tell someone a short story (real or imagined) about fishing.

Invent a new fish species. Tell your friend about it, including where it lives, what it eats, and how to catch it.

Act out an animal that eats fish and see if the other player can guess what it is.

Find something slimy in nature.

Find a place where you think a fish would hide, and explain why you think a fish would like that spot.

Draw yourself as a fish.

Make up a song about fishing and sing it.

What did you find?

Listen to the sounds of nature around you for three minutes.

What was it?

What did you hear?
Protect and Conserve

On an ordinary day out fishing you'll make choices that affect fish and other anglers. Junior ranger anglers set an example of stewardship, taking care of a place, and conservation, protecting nature.

Our Day Fishing
We were so excited for our day fishing! Before we headed out, we checked the rules or regulations. We wanted to stay safe near the water, so we brought a life jacket for each person. The sun was shining. It reminded us to pack sunscreen to protect our skin. After a long time fishing, I felt a tug on the line and reeled in. I did it! I caught a fish! I decided to let it go, and carefully put it back in the water. When it was time to leave, we looked around our site. We didn't want to leave behind any fishing trash or fish hooks. We packed out all of our food wrappers and other trash, too. We left the site looking great for the next anglers and safe for the fish and other wildlife. At home, we got the mud off our boots and made sure they were clean, so we don't carry aquatic hitchhikers. It was a great day! We can't wait to go again!

Pass it On
Think of a friend or family member you would like to invite fishing, and write or draw them a note. If you went fishing, tell them about your day. If you haven't gone fishing yet, tell them something you learned in this book and why you would like to go!

Read the story and complete the crossword puzzle.

WORD BANK
life jacket
line clean trash
regulations
sunscreen

BRAVO! In 2016, to raise awareness about the harmful effects of waste and trash on marine life, students in the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge Annual Salmon Camp program used beach litter to create a salmon mosaic. It's on display at the refuge visitor center.
Continue the Adventure

You’re near the end of this book, and close to getting your Junior Ranger Angler badge! But this is just the beginning. In every state in the U.S. you can find a place to fish, or even just play outside. Plus, you can keep earning junior ranger badges at public lands near you.

Send a fishing invite! Complete the rest of the card by adding your own design and tips you learned from this book. Give your card to a friend or ask an adult to help you address an envelope and mail it.

Cut out the card along the dotted line. Fold it in half and it’s ready to go.

We could go fishing here:

I learned this tip for fishing safely:

I learned this tip for protecting fish and fish habitat:

Visit TakeMeFishing.org to get ready for your next fishing adventure!
Get your badge!

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

Visit fws.gov/refuges/kids/jrrangers for a list of the national fish hatcheries and national wildlife refuges that distribute badges.

Please call or contact a participating hatchery or refuge before you visit to confirm badge availability and operating hours. The list will change as additional refuges and fish hatcheries offer the Junior Ranger: Let’s Go Fishing! Program, so check back often.

**National Park Service**

Contact your local park to see if badges are available.

If you are completing this activity book at home; email a picture of a completed page to junior_rangers@nps.gov.

Make sure to include a name and address!

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**Check it out!**

**Here are some online resources:**

- Explore fish species, learn new fishing techniques, and find places to fish, by visiting TakeMeFishing.org or VamosAPescar.org.

- **Find your next Junior Ranger adventure** at nps.gov/kids/jrrangers.cfm.

- Learn more about fishing in parks and refuges by visiting nps.gov/fishing and fws.gov/fishing.

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**Thank you.**

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